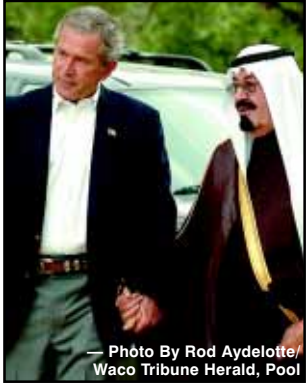


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— Photo By Rod Aydelotte/
Waco Tribune Herald, Pool

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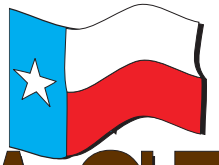
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The Lone Star



ICONOCLAST

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Fallout: NYC

**Citizens Fight
For Clean-Up
Of Toxic Towers**

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T

he contaminated buildings are a clear and present danger. We are currently demanding every place we can that the EPA steps up to the plate and undertakes its responsibility under the EPA's own law and regs.'

— Kimberly Flynn,
9/11 Environmental Action

THE DEUTSCHE BANK BUILDING, also known as 130 Liberty Street or One Bankers Trust Plaza Building, stands across from the World Trade Center Tower 2. During the collapse of the WTC 2, the northern face of this building suffered damage over 15 stories.
— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Bush, Saudi Prince Holds Hands As Big Oil Companies Bloom

By NATHAN DIEBENOW
STAFF WRITER

CRAWFORD — President Bush and Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia turned a few heads walking through bluebonnets at his Prairie Chapel Ranch last Monday, while the Big Four oil companies announced a net gain of \$28.8 billion for the first quarter of this year.

The de facto leader of the world's largest oil-exporting nation was in Texas to meet with Bush to talk about increasing oil production to theoretically drive high energy prices down in the United States.

By the end of the week, oil prices dropped to its lowest level since February — below \$50 a barrel from \$55 to \$49.72 on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

AAA reported that the national average remained at \$2.24 per gallon last Friday, up from \$1.81 at the same time last year. Motorists in California and Hawaii pay more than \$2.50 per gallon. A gallon of regular gas in Crawford was selling for \$2.18 last week.

XOXO

Bush kept pushing the Senate to pass his energy bill, but what seemed to stick in the eye of popular opinion was a picture of Bush leading the Saudi Crown Prince by the hand around his ranch, as they discussed a variety of issues, from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and terrorism to security and trade.

This hand holding not to mention Bush's kiss on both of Abdullah's cheeks, coupled with high gas prices and the memory of the 2001 terrorist attacks (15 of the 19 airplane hijackers were Saudis), failed to sit well with more than a few Americans because it was yet another sign of Bush-Saud coziness.

Blogger Charles Featherstone (www.lewrockwell.com/blog) explained the gesture: "The holding of hands by Saudi men ... means the person you are talking with is important to you and considers you important. You have each other's undivided attention. It is usually done during a

one-on-one conversation, or by someone who wants to get, keep and hold your attention while he is talking with someone else — 'Hold on a minute, you're next.'"

Wahhabism

Although both Bush and Abdullah agreed to once again share resources to fight terrorists last week, the Crown Prince presided over the arrest of 40 Pakistani Christians on the Friday before traveling to Crawford.

The Pakistanis' crime, according to Nina Shea, the director of Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom, was "praying in a private home in the capital Riyadh in violation of the state's strictly enforced religious law that bans all non-Muslim worship."

Shea states in her recent NATIONAL REVIEW column: "As the State Department has determined, there is no religious freedom in Saudi Arabia and everyone there, Muslim or not, must obey the rules of the extreme sharia of the kingdom's established religion, the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam."

"The Saudi state indoctrinates its nationals from an early age in the Wahhabi ideology of zero tolerance for the 'other.' Government textbooks and publications teach that it is a religious obligation for Muslims to hate Christians and Jews and warn against imitating, befriending, or helping them in any way, or taking part in their festivities and celebrations.

She continues: "The state teaches a Nazi-like hatred for Jews, treats the forged Protocols of the Elders of Zion as historical fact, and avows that the Muslim's duty is to eliminate the state of Israel."

Indeed, Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice nor the Bush administration's rhetoric for "democracy" around the globe has little room in Saudi Arabia since monarchy is "king" there, and women were not allowed to vote the week prior, even in that country's first national elections.

Summer Oil

Industry analysts say that U.S. gasoline prices will probably hover over \$2 per gallon through the summer. They also expect the oil compa-



PRESIDENT BUSH escorts Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah to his private office at his ranch in Crawford, Texas Monday, April 25, 2005.

— Photo By Rod Aydelotte/Waco Tribune Herald, Pool

nies to continue to perform well, due to energy demand's growth to outpace supply.

President Bush also suggested last week that oil refineries should be built on closed military bases to increase production.

Saudi Arabia said that by 2009, it will increase production to 12.5 million barrels a day from today's 11 million limit. Saudi Arabia now pumps about 9.5 million barrels daily.

Royal Dutch/Shell Group of Cos., BP Group PLC, Exxon Mobil Corp., and ChevronTexaco Corp. have earned a combined \$97 billion since the end of 2003.

— *The Waco Tribune-Herald and the Associated Press contributed to this report.*

INFO

www.freedomhouse.org/religion
www.nationalreview.com



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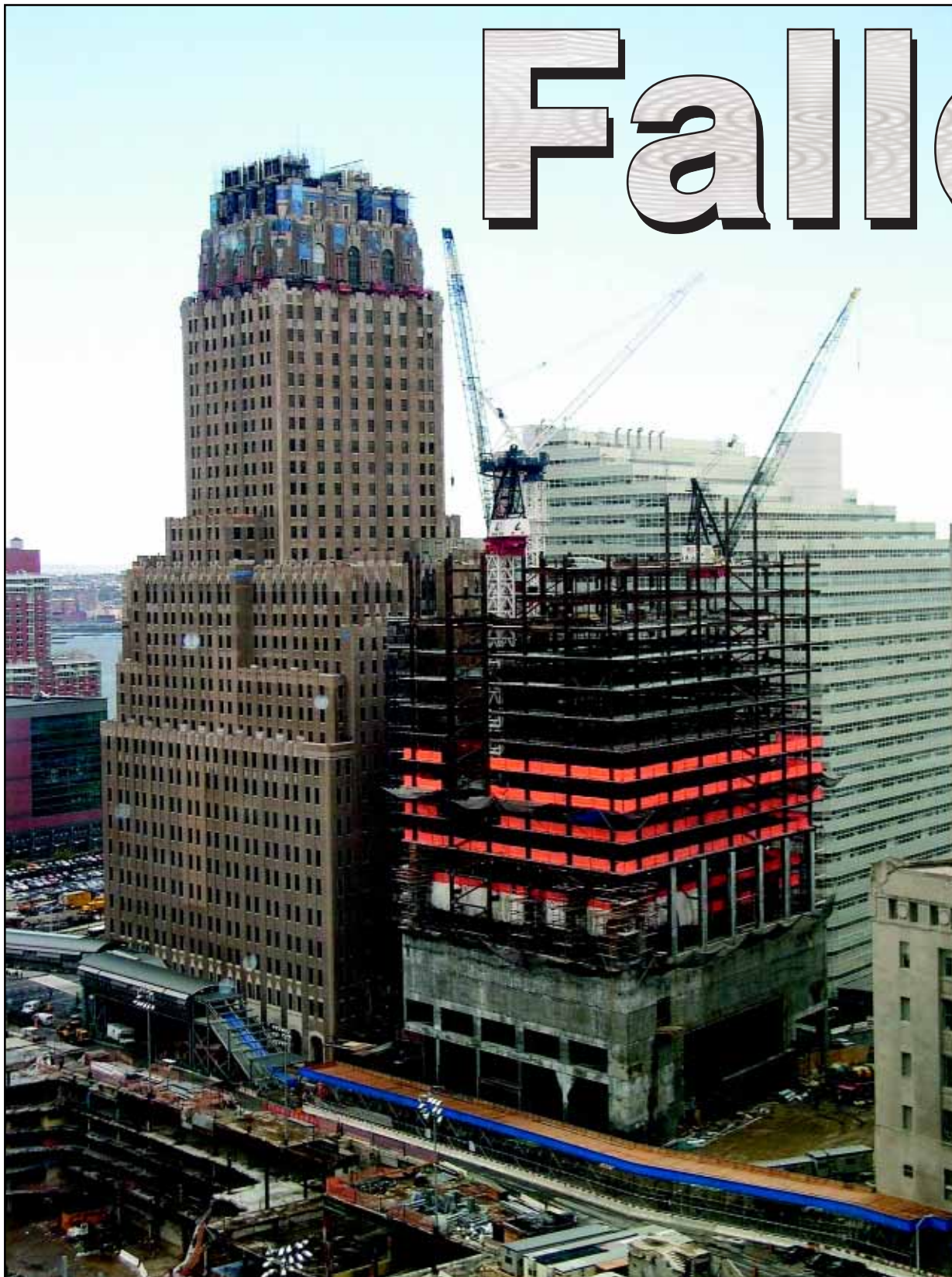
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Fallout: NYC

Citizens Fight For Clean-Up Of Toxic Towers

BY NATHAN DIEBENOW
STAFF WRITER

NEW YORK CITY — Fallout from the 9/11 terrorist attacks continues to rain down on Lower Manhattan three and a half years after the World Trade Center Towers collapsed.

The Environmental Protection Agency, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, and citizen advocacy groups here are still clashing on the removal of the toxic dust circulating in the area and on funds for research and treatment of people who will suffer from the effects of contamination years from now.

Variance Grievances

Activists said last Thursday night at the Community Board #1's committee on Lower Manhattan redevelopment that the LMDC's proposed variances for the asbestos abatement of the former Deutsche Bank building will make the demolition more hazardous to residents and workers.

"The people from the LMDC would not give an inch, but they were sharply challenged in many regards," said Jonathan Bennett, New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health. "Basically they are impervious to logic. I mean, all they really respect is power. If you have the power to make them do it right, they will do it right, but you can't persuade them to do it right no matter how dangerous or illogical what they are proposing is."

Bennett, in a telephone interview with THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST, said that the LMDC's variances that fit into its asbestos protection plan will not be sufficient to protect workers inside the Deutsche Bank building (130 Liberty) from a plethora of other toxic debris. Though the LMDC plans to seal off four floors of the building at a time to safely strip bare concrete and steel in a negative-pressure atmosphere, its variance included using exhaust fans with filters that only trap asbestos particles.

"They (LMDC) just say, 'Well, we're assuming that asbestos is a surrogate for all the other contaminants.' We know they're not right about mercury, but the other things, there's no science behind it," Bennett said.

"If you were to protect yourself from mercury, you'd need an additional filter in your respirator," he said, noting that gas is the state mercury generally forms. "There are serious questions about whether the asbestos filter will protect people from dioxin and lead. There's no reason to assume that it will protect you from any of those things."

Another variance asks for contractors and their employees who belong to specialty trades to be allowed into the asbestos abatement area, even though they hold no licenses to handle asbestos. Under the law, everyone who

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Battered By The Collapse

THE VERIZON CENTRAL OFFICE BUILDING at 140 West Street (left) was battered by the Twin Towers' collapse on Sept. 11, 2001, but Verizon Communications which currently occupies space in the 1095 building, plans to relocate its corporate headquarters here.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

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• FALLOUT: NYC Citizens Fight For Clean-up Of Toxic Towers ... Continued From Page 3

enters these areas must have an asbestos-awareness license and be respirator qualified, said Bennett.

"This is one of the biggest cities in the world. It makes no sense that they couldn't find elevator constructors and others who are qualified, and if they're not qualified, they can get qualified. The licensing is not that difficult," he said. "And also the community will be safer if the workers are licensed because there's always the possibility someone is going to do something (by accident) inside the abatement."

LMDC also applied for a variance to use a shredder in the abatement area, saying doing so will increase workers' safety because it will make the demolished material easier to handle.

"When you're dealing with asbestos, the object is to keep it out of the air if possible," said Bennett. "Nobody we could find has said anything about using a shredder in an operation like this, but they want to do it."

Bennett said that judging from the variance requests, LDCM only wants to save money. "They're not essential. It's not like there's something about this building that makes it impossible for them to do it without getting the variance. It's just that they want to do it. We say that's not a good enough reason."

The variance package was sent to New York State Department of Labor earlier this month. Final action by the NYS DOL is to be taken this week.

"We've already moved them far off the dime. Their original plans were really dangerous," said Bennett. "Now, while never acknowledging that their plans were dangerous at all, they've made them a lot less dangerous. I think we're going to move them more still. It will never be the way we would do it, but it'll be a lot closer to it."

The EPA Region 2 Communications Division and LMDC failed to return phone calls for interviews.

Dust Devils

The EPA would be the lead governmental agency to oversee the clean up of the remaining three WTC-contaminated buildings, if the member organizations of the World Trade Center Community/Labor Coalition had their way.

The EPA is currently serving in an advisory role, making recommendations to the LMDC whose first demolition plan for 130 Liberty was returned to further strengthen environmental safeguards.

"The contaminated buildings are a clear and present danger. We are currently demanding every place we can that the EPA steps up to the plate and undertakes its responsibility under the EPA's own law and regs," said Kimberly Flynn, member of community advocacy group 9/11 Environmental Action.

Presidential Decision Directive #62 of 1998 states that the EPA's job is to handle contaminated areas from terrorist attacks.

Had the EPA taken immediate action respiratory illnesses would have been prevented in hundreds of thousands of people from rescue workers at Ground Zero to residents of Brooklyn from the toxic cocktail of lead, asbestos, mercury,

dioxin, PCBs and PAHs, argue Jenna Orkin, mother of a teenager who attended school four blocks away from the disaster.

"You have the synergistic effect of these contaminants working together. Little is known about that, but for instance, if you're an asbestos worker and a smoker, it's not just twice as bad as being one or the other. It's 80 or 90 times as bad," said Orkin. "At Stuyvesant High School, where my son was a student, they not only had the World Trade Center site, but they also had the waste transfer

barge where all the debris was brought on their north doorstep, so they had it on both sides. No matter which way the wind was blowing, they got it, and the ventilation system (in the school) was only 10 percent effective (in capturing the toxic dust)."

The August 2003 EPA Inspector General's report revealed that the White House Council on Environmental Quality edited the EPA's press releases soon after the WTC's collapse to downplay the asbestos dangers and to reopen Wall Street. The IG Report also explained that EPA performed only limited cleanups of sites.

"We hold the White House responsible. This is well documented," said Flynn, in a telephone interview with THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST, noting that then-EPA chair Christie Todd Whitman announced on Sept. 13, "EPA is greatly relieved to have learned that there appears to be no significant levels of asbestos dust in the air in New York City."

The EPA in fall 2002 during its volunteer indoor cleanup program for residents cleaned only 4,100 of the estimated 30,000 residences in certain areas. Cleaning for nonresidential buildings or businesses using public funds has not been available.

"What is happening here is that instead of designing a program in the spirit of lessons learned to correct the earlier inadequacies of the testing and clean up, EPA is essentially making the same mistakes all over again," said Flynn.

Grave Buildings

At the forefront of the clean up conflict are the three WTC-contaminated buildings near Ground Zero, each on different timetables for demolition. Two of the buildings are owned by local government bodies, while the other is privately owned.

"We say that the EPA should have overall authority over the demolition over all three buildings. We're not saying that EPA should do the demolition, but we're saying that he EPA should be in a position to enforce whatever standards that are agreed upon for the demolition for these buildings," said Bennett of NYCOSH. "We think that it shouldn't be a matter of a private company doing the work and the government agency coming in on the basis of a complaint or occasionally to make sure that it's being done right."

The EPA has since doubled the cost of the bank building's demolition to \$90 million for more safeguards. The bank and its insurers, Allianz AG and Axa SA, have been asked to pay. The site is



Jenna Orkin



DUST DEVIL — A chain-mail like cloth drapes over the Deutsche Bank building at 130 Liberty Street (left) in Lower Manhattan last year. A 15 story gash was created when steel girders from World Trade Center Tower 2 fell on the Deutsche Bank's northern face on Sept. 11, 2001. Tons of hazardous debris from the collapsed towers shot into the building which is still there today.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

slated to be cleared by 2009 for an \$11 billion office tower, memorial, and transit hub at the World Trade Center site.

"It's our position that because they (the buildings) have so much in common that there really should be a single protocol for dealing with preventing the workers and residents from the toxic materials in these buildings," said Jonathan Bennett, New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH), an advocacy group for worker safety. "We don't see any reason for why that particular thing should be invented three times."

The building at 4 Albany Street, owned by the Deutsche Bank, is in the process of having its interior excavated. Action on the second building Fiterman Hall, owned jointly by the City University of New York and the state Dormitory Authority, might take place as early as the fall of 2005.

The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, the New York state agency overseeing Ground Zero redevelopment, is currently in talks with the EPA and the state to raze the former Deutsche Bank building at 130 Liberty this summer. The LMDC purchased this 40-story building — the most visible reminder of the terrorist attacks — for \$90 million from Deutsche Bank last year with the sole intent to tear it down.

"It's the most toxic building in the

world. The LMDC is in way over their heads," said Flynn. "We believe they let the Duetche Bank off real easy."

A 15-story gash across the Deutsche Bank caused by fallen girders from the trade center's south tower has exposed the interior to dust containing asbestos, lead, dioxin, and rain that brought mold and bacteria. The Deutsche Bank is opened to the elements. A chain-mail type of material is currently draped over the bank building. Seven months ago, pieces of glass from a window crashed to the ground. No one was harmed because it happened on a low foot-traffic day — Sunday.

Advocates continue to encourage the LMDC and the EPA to hold more meetings with the various community groups, from First Responders and the Metro Transit Authority to parent/teacher organizations and labor unions, for the good of New York City. Flynn added that the winds on Lower Manhattan, which are strong enough to lift people off the ground, constantly help contaminate the area with toxic dust from the Duetche Bank building.

"There's a subway intake right there (by Ground Zero), so it's very likely that if there's a toxic release from the building, it's going to get sucked into the train," Flynn said. "The NYC subway system is ventilated solely by air being

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pulled in as the trains run by. The trains act like a piston that drive air through the subway. The vent is under the building.”

Also nearby are two residential buildings and the World Financial Center, home of Dow Jones & Company, Merrill Lynch & Company, and American Express Company.

“We are not the greatest admirers of what the EPA has done in Lower Manhattan, and it is a little odd of us to put so much faith in them, but they are the agency with the expertise,” said Bennett. “They are the only agency capable of doing it right. We happen to keep our fingers crossed that if they take the responsibility, which they have yet to do, they will make sure that it gets done right.”

Dangerous Precedent

Orkin pointed out that not only the way the federal, state, and local governments are handling the demolition of these “toxic towers” sets a dangerous precedent for cleanups of future terrorist attacks, but also the way the government allocates funds to recover the economic and physical health of communities and individuals.

Flynn stated that a portion of the \$2 billion community development block grant earmarked by Congress to respond to the ongoing impact of the disaster on people’s lives, such as for job training programs and low income housing, is being used toward the demolition of 130 Liberty. She noted that about 500 firefighters had to retire because their lungs are shot, and they can’t be exposed to more smoke and fire, and that neighborhoods like Chinatown with its renowned restaurants were a part of a frozen zone that forced laborers out of work.

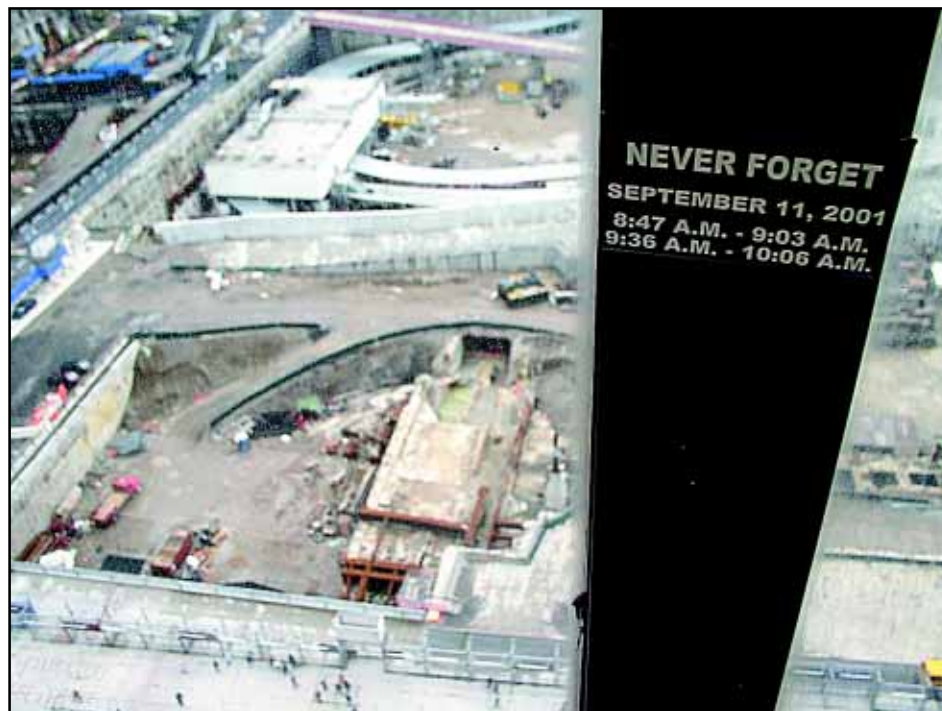
“Everyone needs to understand that the heroes of Ground Zero are ailing, and the government for the most part has abandoned them,” Flynn said. “And a large part of Chinatown’s economic subsistence is restaurants, and what happens if Chinatown is frozen for two months? This is was the rolling impact of 9/11.

“Some 40 small garment factories shut down on Sept. 9/11 and never re-

opened, so at one point you had one-in-three low wage workers in Chinatown forced out of work. That meant people couldn’t pay their rent. People lost their housing. I mean, this is the kind of situation that this community health block grant money was earmarked to respond to. The LMDC sat on it until now.”

Flynn seemed optimistic by the actions of Michael Chertoff, new Homeland Security Czar, who toured the city with Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg (R-NY), Senator Hilary Clifton (D-NY) and Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY). Chertoff has said that the federal counter-terrorism money will be allocated in accordance with a risk based formula, which is good news for New Yorkers who have seen funds sent to Wyoming, a state receiving more per capita in funding than New York.

“It’s a story Texans need to understand. People think that George Bush is the guy who can make us all more secure. Well, ask New York City how secure we feel in the aftermath of 9/11,” said Flynn.



THE SUBWAY TERMINAL below the World Trade Center site reopened soon after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York City. Rising above the terminal are three buildings contaminated by various toxic substances yet to be razed safely.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

New DVD On Ground Zero Contamination, ‘Confronting The Evidence,’ Being Distributed

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — It isn’t every day that the producers of a DVD encourage the public to copy and distribute their work, but this is the case with a new DVD entitled: “Confronting The Evidence — A Call To Reopen the 9-11 Investigation.”

Over 250,000 copies of the DVD, which has been produced by “Reopen911.org, Walden3.org,” are being distributed worldwide to schools, fire and police stations, libraries, New York businesses, and private individuals. The producers ask viewers to “see the true story of how the Bush Administration deceived America about Ground Zero air quality in this disturbing new DVD.”

According to the producers, when President George W. Bush came to Ground Zero two days after the 9/11 attack, he urged everyone to shop. “Ironically, the expression – Shop Till You Drop

– would have been more appropriate. In fact, the raw truth about the air is that it was, as scientist Marjorie Clarke says, ‘Equivalent to dozens of asbestos factories, incinerators and crematoria.’”

The White House Council on Environmental Quality changed EPA’s press releases turning warnings of asbestos into reassurances, say the producers. “The EPA also said ‘The air is safe to breathe’ at the World Trade Center. This has seriously injured the health of Manhattan workers and residents. It is even killing some of the heroes who worked at Ground Zero.”

In the DVD, testimony suggests that Christine Whitman, EPA administrator, and New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani lied to New Yorkers and visitors from around the world that there were “no significant problems.”

“Shockingly and no consciousness of forethought, the New York City Dept of Health told residents to clean their apartments with a wet mop or wet rag,” notes the DVD.

In “Confronting the Evidence,” scientists Dr. Cate Jenkins, Dr. Marjorie Clarke, Paul Bartlett, and others say they issued warnings about inhaling toxic dust and fumes, but were ignored by the agencies in charge.

Among the contaminants being spread from Ground Zero were these, according to the DVD:

- 200,000 pounds of lead from 50,000 computers at WTC
- Hundreds of tons of cancer-causing asbestos
- Over 10,000 fluorescents, and each of which contained enough mercury to contaminate a quarter of a city block
- Thousands of smoke detectors containing radioactive americium 241
- The alkalinity of the air equivalent to that of Drano
- Highest levels of vanadium ever recorded

It was noted that some rescue workers were not allowed to wear respirators on the ground that they might frighten the public and that insurance companies of-

ten refused to pay for cleanup on the grounds that the EPA said the air was safe.

The DVD explains how some children in nearby schools have developed serious respiratory problems and half of those who cleaned ground zero have serious health problems.

“Confronting the Evidence” reveals that the man responsible for cover-up was previously an industry lawyer who represented major asbestos and toxic polluters, that hundreds of firefighters can no longer work, and that 15 rescue dogs have died.

And, says the DVD, “despite the studies which continue to point to the hazards of exposure to Ground Zero contaminants, neither the federal government nor New York City has yet cleaned up the city’s firehouses. One firefighter who did not join the department until after the World Trade Center fires had gone out has now been found to have new onset asthma attributable to exposure at his firehouse near Ground Zero.

“Plain and simply — extremely hazardous materials became airborne when the

World Trade Center disintegrated and thus posed a most serious health threat to people who live and work in the downtown area, not just Ground Zero.”

The DVD explains that public trust in government has diminished as some workers and residents have become sick and required medical attention. Comprehensive, representative testing has yet to be performed in the area affected by the dust and fires of the disaster. Following a year of discussions with the World Trade Center Expert Technical Review Panel, the EPA is expected to release a new sampling plan within a few weeks. A preliminary plan submitted to a panel of outside technical experts was found wanting in several areas including quality control, number of contaminants to be studied and reliance on a ‘signature’ to determine the presence of World Trade Center dust.

For more information, visit: <<http://www.reopen911.org/freedvd.php>>.



THE DATE AND TIMES of when the Twin Towers were attacked and collapsed in Lower Manhattan are fastened to a window from the offices of Lutheran Disaster Response of New York overlooking the WTC footprints last year.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Oil Company Profits Show Dramatic Increases While Gasoline Prices At The Pump Soar

IRVING, Texas — Exxon Mobil Corp., the world's largest publicly traded oil company that is based in Irving, posted a 44 percent profit gain during the first

quarter of this year, as its net income jumped to \$7.86 billion, up from \$5.44 billion a year ago.

Royal Dutch/Shell Group also saw

increased profits, from \$4.33 billion a year ago to \$5.55 billion during the first quarter.

With the price of gasoline at the pump reaching record highs forcing consumers to adjust personal budgets or limit travel, oil companies claim that demand is rising faster than the supply, thereby allowing them to justify dramatic increases in the cost of the fuel they sell. Much of the increased de-

mand, they say, that is allowing them to reap record profits, is economic growth in Asia and North America that is tied to consumption of oil products.

They claim that the trend in rising prices appears to be solid, with no signs of abatement.

Combined net income at four of the biggest oil companies — Exxon Mobil, BP Plc, Shell, and ConocoPhillips — saw a rise of 39 percent during the first quarter.

Boothe Asks 'Is It Economical To Protect The Environment?'

FORT WORTH — "Good environmental planning is good economics," states Ben B. Boothe, an economic and environmental consultant, in his latest newsletter, Global Perspectives.

"More and more studies are showing that good environmental practices are good economics. More businessmen are coming to believe that dirty environment is bad business, and that clean environment is cost effective," says Boothe, who travels the world to gain insight from other countries.

"Polls around the world indicate that a vast majority of the world's people want their governments and business to provide clean environmental policies," he notes.

Boothe has authored a book dealing with environmental issues. His website is available at <<http://www.benboothe.com>>.

Global Warming Solutions 2005 Set In June

NEW YORK CITY — Clean Air-Cool Planet's second regional conference "Global Warming Solutions 2005" is slated for June 8 and 9 Roosevelt Hotel, New York City. The conference will focus on the risks and benefits for businesses, investors, and financial institutions with regard to global warming.

Those who should attend include corporate leaders, Wall Street executives, university presidents, senior administrators, municipal and city officials, policy makers in state governments, and environmental advocates and other community leaders.

Clean Air-Cool Planet's first confer-

ence, held in Hartford in 2003, drew enthusiastic responses from among those in the business, municipal and higher education sectors.

Clean Air-Cool Planet, the region's leading organization dedicated to finding and promoting solutions to global warming, creates partnerships in the Northeast to implement solutions to climate change and build constituencies for effective climate policies and actions.

For more information, visit the website.

INFO

www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/conference_GWS05/index.php

Conscientious Objector To Speak In San Diego May 20

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Army Reservist Aidan Delgado will speak about "Why I became a Conscientious Objector" on Friday, May 20, at 7:30 p.m., in San Diego, Calif.

Delgado was honorably discharged Iraq War Veteran after spending six months of his year in Iraq helping run the now-infamous Abu Ghraib prison. He was witness to widespread, almost daily, U.S. war crimes in Iraq. His story contains new revelations about ongoing

brutality at Abu Ghraib.

The location of his talk will be at Bard Hall, First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego, 4190 Front Street, Hillcrest, San Diego (opposite UCSD Medical Center).

For more information, contact Tanja Winter.

INFO

Winter, (858) 459-4650
PeaceDemTF@aol.com

Union Organizing Workshops Held Monthly

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A union organizing workshop sponsored by the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute is slated for Friday, June 10, and run each Friday

each month.

The AFL-CIO conducts national workshops several times per month teaching the basics of union organizing. Representatives of Affiliate Unions of the AFL-CIO are present to talk to people about working on on-going campaigns

The location of the national workshops is at the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute, 815 16th Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

For more information, contact Joyce Krawczyk.

INFO

Krawczyk, (202) 550-4847
jkrawczyk@afcio.org
www.organize.afcio.org

Hiroshima-Nagasaki Remembrance Set Aug. 6 In Connecticut

HARTFORD, Conn. — Connecticut United For Peace Connecticut Coalition For Peace and Justice is sponsoring a Hiroshima-Nagasaki Remembrance and Speak Out Against New Forms of Nuclear Weapons on Saturday, Aug. 6, at 5 p.m.

There will be potluck picnic with conversations about nuclear weapons. At 7 p.m. "candle boats" will be set adrift in the Connecticut River.

The location of the event is Hartford's Riverside Park off East Service Road in Hartford.

For more information, contact Wayne Coste.

INFO

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Camp Wellstone Seattle To Run June 10-12

SEATTLE, Wash. — Camp Wellstone Seattle, a 2.5-day training program aimed at teaching progressives how to win on issues and elect good candidates,

will run from Friday through Sunday, June 10-12.

“We use a distinctive approach to politics, based on Paul Wellstone’s success at integrating grassroots organizing, electoral organizing, progressive public policy and ethical leadership,” said a spokesperson.

The training schedule is Friday, June 10, from 2:30 - 9:00 p.m., Saturday, June 11, from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., and Sunday, June 12, from 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Camp Wellstone is for anyone interested in gaining valuable skills in effective political action: candidates and those considering a run for office, volunteer and paid campaign workers, and citizen activists involved in community or issue organizing. The program is fast-paced and highly interactive. Sessions are led by grassroots organizers and campaign professionals from across the United States and the local community.

Participants can choose from one of three tracks:

1. Being a Candidate: How to Run and Win the Wellstone Way

This track covers the fundamentals of grassroots political campaigns, successful fundraising, field organizing, budgeting, planning, volunteer coordination, get-out-the-vote and media relations. It focuses on ethical leadership and standing up for a set of values, and is designed to help participants to run and win successful campaigns. We recommend this track for individuals who are now, or who are interested in becoming, candidates for political office.

2. Working on a Campaign: Tools and

Tactics for Success

This track also covers the fundamentals of grassroots political campaigns, successful fundraising, field organizing, budgeting, planning, volunteer coordination, get-out-the-vote and media relations from the perspective of those who make it happen. Participants learn the skills that are essential to putting your candidate or local team in the best position to win. We recommend this track for individuals who would like to work in a paid or volunteer capacity in political campaigns.

3. Citizen Activism, Advocacy and Organizing

This track presents ideas, strategies and tactics to strengthen issue-based organizing, as well as to develop the capacity of grassroots leaders. It gives citizen activists the skills to plan and implement successful campaigns, develop a message, build the base, work with volunteers, advocate within legislative bodies and build sustainable organizations. We recommend this for track for individuals who want to more strategically move their issues forward.

The cost is \$75 or just \$35 for students, low-income, or unemployed participants. We are not able to guarantee your space for the Seattle, WA Camp if payment is not received by June 3. Camp participants are responsible for their own accommodations.

For more information, visit the website.

INFO

www.wellstone.org

Camp Sheila Wellstone Atlanta Set May 19-20

ATLANTA, Ga. — Camp Sheila Wellstone Atlanta will run from 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 19, and from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Friday, May 20.

Camp Sheila Wellstone is a intensive 2-day training program that provides advocates working to end violence against women and children with skills in the areas of action planning, grassroots organizing and mobilizing, message and media, and political engagement.

Breakfast on Friday and lunches Thursday and Friday will be provided. The cost is free to participants. Camp Sheila Wellstone Atlanta is sponsored in part by the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault, and Men Stopping Violence.

For more information about the Sheila Wellstone Institute, visit the website.

INFO

elana@wellstone.org
www.wellstone.org

House Okays Gay Marriage Ban Amendment

AUSTIN — The Texas House last Monday approved a proposal to ban same-sex marriages and civil unions through an amendment to the state constitution. The bill, as of last week, had no Senate sponsor.

Approved 101-29, the amendment won one more vote than the 100 necessary for approval of a constitutional amendment.

The amendment, if approved by two-thirds of the senators, will be put on the ballot next fall for voters.

Texas has a law against same-sex marriages, but the amendment’s supporters said this new action will cut off potential courthouse battles over same-sex unions.

Opponents argue that the amendment will support discrimination, not unlike that of African-American segregation when interracial marriages were deemed illegal.

The Senate two years ago approved a similar law prohibiting the recognition of same-sex unions from any other state.

— *The Houston Chronicle* contributed to this report.



Master explorer Dirk Pitt® (Matthew McConaughey) takes on the adventure of his life when he embarks on a treasure hunt through some of the most dangerous regions of West Africa. Searching for what locals call the “Ship of Death,” a long lost Civil War battleship which protects a secret cargo, Pitt and his wisecracking sidekick (Steve Zahn) use their wits and clever heroics to help Doctor Eva Rojas (Penelope Cruz), when they realize the ship may be linked to mysterious deaths in the very same area.

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Patented Invention Increases Chances of Tornado Survival

Storm Shelter Passes Rigorous University Testing

LUBBOCK — The sound of approaching tornadoes has been likened to that of an oncoming freight train. But only by those lucky enough to survive them.

And while many communities continue to improve their tornado warning systems, meteorologists and civil defense personnel continue to be con-founded in their efforts to get the word

out about tornado sightings so that no lives are lost to these deadliest of storms.

Dale Watson, a mid-Westerner himself, wanted to give people a way of protecting themselves. According to engineers at the Wind Science Research Center at Texas Tech University, Watson has done just that.

At first glance, the Damar Tornado

Safe Bed looks no different from an ordinary bed. Beneath the dust ruffle and the pillow shams, however, is a shelter anchored to a concrete slab with sixteen wedge bolts rated at 13,800 pounds each. The all-steel enclosure is designed to replace the box spring and frame portion of your bed. When a storm threatens you and your family, simply raise the lid, step inside, lie down, lock the lid, and wait out the storm.

"We were pretty thrilled with the engineering report when it came back," says Watson, who owns the Austin-based storm shelter firm. "It showed that our shelter is strong enough to withstand a 15-pound two-by-four flying at 200 miles per hour."

Damar Safe Beds, which have been featured at Home and Garden shows throughout the "Tornado Alley" area, are available in full, queen and king sizes. More information is available on their website, <http://www.damartornadosafebed.com/>.

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Safe bed is new tornado avoidance concept.

Texas Folklife Festival Advance Tickets On Sale

SAN ANTONIO — Tickets to the 34th annual Texas Folklife Festival, which celebrates the colorful and diverse cultures of the Lone Star State, are available at www.texasfolklifestival.org and at select locations in the San Antonio region.

Discount adult tickets (13 and older) are \$8 and children's tickets (ages 6-12) are \$4. Children 5 and under are always admitted free. Four-day wristbands may be purchased for \$25 and group and other discounts are also available

via the Web site. Advance tickets purchased on the festival's Web site and by phone will be mailed directly to the purchaser's address.

Visitors will find more than 150 authentic ethnic foods created by 40 cultural groups, 10 entertainment stages of world music and dance and some of Texas' finest arts and crafts from more than 60 vendors. New activities this year include The Side Street Circus, a group of zany and entertaining performers, along with "Prehistoric Journey," an exhibit in the Institute of Texas

Cultures where visitors can travel back in time from the Ice Age to the time of dinosaurs. Created by Dinosaur George and his paleontology experts at Dinosaur World, this interactive exhibit will

mesmerize and delight the child in everyone.

Tickets at the gate are \$10 for adults (13 and older) and \$4 for children (ages 6-12); children 5 and under are free.

Monnig Meteorite Gallery Hosting Space Day May 6

FORT WORTH — TCU's Oscar E. Monnig Meteorite Gallery will partner with Lockheed Martin to host the first ever Space Day at TCU on Friday, May 6. The event will be held from 6:30 p.m. - 11 p.m. and feature presentations by

NASA astronaut Rick Hieb and NASA/JPL Deep Impact Mission scientist Calina Seybold.

Other scheduled activities include telescope viewings, tours of the Monnig Meteorite Gallery and a "Hollywood in Space" presentation by Doug Ingram, a physics and astronomy professor at TCU.

Space Day schedule at the Ed Landreth Auditorium includes: 6:30 p.m. - 7:10 p.m., Dr. Doug Ingram, "Hollywood in Space," ; 7:20 p.m. - 8 p.m., Former NASA Astronaut Rick Hieb; 8:10 p.m. - 8:50 p.m., NASA/JPL Deep Impact Mission scientist Calina Seybold.

Other activities include: 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. Telescope and Skymap Class; Sid Richardson Physical Sciences Building, Room 217; 6:30 p.m. - 11 p.m., Monnig Meteorite Gallery Tours, Sid Richardson Physical Sciences Building; dark - 11 p.m., Telescope Party; Between Sid Richardson Physical Sciences Building and Mary Coats Burnett Library.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information on the event, call (817) 257-6277 or visit the gallery's web site at (monnigmuseum.tcu.edu).

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Women Peace Activists Release Book About War

SAN FRANCISCO — CODEPINK: Women for Peace released a new book last Sunday, the two-year anniversary of President Bush's declared the Iraq war "mission accomplished." The authors are currently on a 50-city book tour, with CODEPINK chapters throughout the country supporting the tour by holding town-hall style events, book release parties, and political actions.

The book entitled *Stop The Next War Now: Effective Responses To Violence and Terrorism* captures not only the expertise of policy makers but also the insights of those who have experienced the effects of war first hand.

More than 70 experts and activists contributed to this new collection of essays about how the global peace movement can successfully stop the next war. Edited by CODEPINK cofounders Medea Benjamin and Jodie Evans, with a forward by Alice Walker and an introduction by Arundhati Roy, the book offers a time-sensitive, poignant, and practical examination of the increasing world threat of more war and violence; and provides tools that range from changes we can make in our daily lives to ways we can rally the millions of people who support nonviolence to actually take action. Inner Ocean published the book.

A sampling of the essays includes those written by Congresswoman Barbara Lee on taking risks for peace, Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai on preventing resource wars, journalist Helen Thomas on the responsibility of the media, writer Barbara Ehrenreich on feminism as a counterterrorism strategy, radio host Amy Goodman on the power of dissent, columnist Arianna Huffington on overcoming oil addiction, conscientious objector Camilo Mejia on dissent in the military, and Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto on ending poverty.

Before the Iraq war, CODEPINK encouraged women throughout the United States and the world to make the color pink synonymous with political rabble rousing. The group hung 40-foot pink banners with political slogans out hotel windows, handed out pink educational flyers at pink lemonade stands, and awarded pink slips (actual women's slips) to political and corporate leaders who were leading the US toward war. They yelled out questions during Donald Rumsfeld's testimony in Congress about torture at Abu Ghraib; chained themselves to the entrance of the Halliburton's shareholders meeting; and brought US military families to Iraq to meet Iraqi victims of US bombs.

Medea Benjamin is founding director of Global Exchange and cofounder of CODEPINK: Women for Peace. She lives in San Francisco, Calif. Jodie Evans, cofounder of CODEPINK and a political activist for 30 years, lives in Los Angeles, Calif. They have been featured in numerous national and local media outlets including the NEW YORK TIMES, CNN, ABC News, National Public Radio, and THE VILLAGE VOICE.

INFO www.codepinkalert.org/

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Colin Powell On Tap For SMU's '05-'06 Tate Lecture Series

DALLAS — Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, journalist Christiane Amanpour and architect Frank Gehry highlight the 2005-06 season of the Willis M. Tate Distinguished Lecture Series at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Current season ticket holders have until May 31 to renew their seats. Those who want to be added to a waiting list for season tickets may contact SMU Program Services at (214) 768-8283. For more information, visit www.tateseries.com.

Colin Powell, former Secretary of State, kicks off the series on Tuesday, Sept. 6, interviewed by David Gergen, editor-at-large, U.S. News & World Report, former presidential advisor.

Other speakers include David McCullough, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and author, Tuesday, Oct. 11; Eliot Spitzer, Attorney General, State of New York, Tuesday, Nov. 15; Frank Gehry, Architect, Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2006; Isabel Allende, Author of The House of Spirits, Tuesday, March 7. Juan Enriquez, founder and former director of the Harvard Business School Life Sciences Project, Tuesday, March 28; and Christiane Amanpour, Chief International Correspondent, CNN, Tuesday, April 18.

'United Against Violence' Reggae Festival Slated For July 15-17

MONTREAL, Canada — The Montreal International Reggae Festival is set for July 15-17 on the Old Port of Montreal, Montreal, PQ.

The festival will include 17 of the biggest names in Reggae music performers unite along with 40 other artists and bands from across the world to display a festival of unity and peace "United Against Violence." About 20,000 people per day are expected to attend this event.

For more information, contact Cezar Brumeanu.

INFO

info@montrealreggaefestival.com
www.montrealreggaefestival.com

William Rivers Pitt Joins PDA

LITCHFIELD PARK, Ariz. — William Rivers Pitt, well known editorialist with the alternative news magazine "truthout," has joined the staff of Progressive Democrats of America as its editorial director.

Among his roles is to provide reports on PDA actions and activities across the country, to run the "blog," and to write essays on a variety of political topics.

For more information on PDA, log onto: <<http://www.pdamerica.org>>.



Texas Supreme Court To Hear School Finance Arguments July 6

AUSTIN — The Texas Supreme Court will hear arguments in a lawsuit concerning the state's school funding system, in an announcement made last week. Opening statements begin on Monday, July 6, in the case brought on by more than 300 school districts, a mixture of property-rich and property-poor.

Lawmakers are currently struggling to reform the financing of public schools in Texas. One House bill proposes a simultaneous increase in sales taxes and decrease in property taxes, a plan which various educational groups have spoke out against.

Changes in the \$30 billion system must be court-approved. The Legisla-

ture's session ends May 30.

— The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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The Prophets and the Profitable

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "If you're set on robbery, a church is better'n a pistol."

I was watching Telebabble the other day and heard a \$50 haircut gushing on about the strange new alliance between Catholics and FUNDamentalists over control of your sex life.

I think he was one of the same guys who just tearfully the nation's cops tracking down the heart-rending tragedy of nuptial cold feet. But I digress. Again.

Like most Teevee stars, his knowledge of history is limited to the March of Time is a morning stroll, the eternal saga of since he woke up.

Sort of like a goose.

Without the eggs and weed control.

Of course the Fundies and Pa-pists love one another.

They're what my cheek-turning, neighbor-loving grandmother used to call Rules Christians.

She prayed for them.

I don't. I am an unrepentant, vengeful sinner. I expect the companionship of the Falwellites will be my only solace among the torments of hell.

Rules Christians don't want to go to all the trouble that Jesus Christ stirs up.

They just listen to the preacher and don't have to mess with all the contradictions with which the Bible is rife. Like life. (A little internal rhyme for all you literary types.)

You don't have to worry with situation ethics or ethics situations, conflicts between the prophets and the profitable, decency and dogma. Just listen to the preacher.

Or the Pope.

And don't confuse morality with the power of religion.

Rules Christianity means never having to say you're sorry.

You get to declare that other people are sorry.

The world is full of sinners.

The Rules Church is full of victims of circumstance.

Like, for example, it's okay if Pope Benny was a member of the Hitler Youth. Even if he lied about when he joined.

He only did it to survive.

Like Pope Pious XII.

God forbid that a Christian should risk survival because of his religion.

It's not like the Nazis didn't do some good.

Freeways and I.G. Farben.

Oh, I'm sorry. The company that made Zyklon-B, the death camp gas, no longer exists.

It's now Bayer, Hoechst, Agfa and BASF.

Like Ben, new and improved.

Deutschmarks uber Alles.

So His Holipocrisiness doesn't have to say, "Okay, I was a Nazi! It zeemed like a goot idea at der time. It vas before mein conversion und der B-17s! Before Dresden, who knew?"

But if there's forgiveness for Werner von Braun, there must be

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



some for Benny Sixteen.

He just has to deal with the dichotomy of being solidly against masturbation and birth control while remaining ambivalent about bugging 11,000 little boys.

Can Benedict be forgiven for the painful embarrassment of oligarchy?

Is the Bear a Catholic?

That's what the Protestant Reformation was all about.

Rules versus reason.

Reason reveals the difference between those parts of the Bible that are the Word of God, and when He's just jacking with you.

Reason dictates that when the planet can't support any more people, it is a sin to make more.

Rules say you're not supposed to enjoy sex.

That's why God made it so much fun.

Reason dictates a common understanding.

Rules say take over the government and compel those you can't convert.

Which is why we need christian judges.

We have to make the unbelievers see the light.

Through the bars.

Leadeth them in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Follow the yellow line. No talking.

Could it be that the only time Jesus Christ ever made it to the courthouse, he was a defendant?

And let's face it, these judges ain't Gideon or Deborah.

They're more along the lines of Isaac Parker or Kenesaw Mountain Landis.

Frankly, if your religion dictates that you hold snakes, or a Saudi despot's hand that's fine.

If the Pope can be an ex-Nazi, it's okay for Neighbor Bush to be queer for a totalitarian monarchist whose culture and religion resembles the National Association of Man-Boy Love bi-laws. After all, at last count, the Bush family has made about two billion dollars sucking up to the Saudis, and we can't let the spread of democracy affect the bottom line.

Just don't be surprised during the Second Coming if the Lord runs you out of the church house with a wet well rope.

But it is an incredibly short step to the Inquisition from somebody else's church telling your doctor how to practice medicine, public schools ordering your kid to pray to a god you don't believe in and that only Jerry Falwell or Jesse Jackson can decide whether you get to live or die.

So if the Frist Baptist Church of Indebtedness wants his own judges, let him get them the same way everybody else does.

Bribe 'em.



Editorial

Opinion - Columns - Letters

OP/ED

— Editorial —

Time For EPA To Come Clean

The first travesty of 9-11 is that it happened. The second is that the Environmental Protection Agency forgot its middle name.

The third is that too many Americans remain convinced that the "official story" behind that tragic day is the truth. They have been told that to believe otherwise is unpatriotic. If one official story, such as WMDs were in Iraq, was a lie, another might also be.

While Iraqis and American soldiers are poisoned with silver bullets that pelt the dust of depleted uranium into the air, residents of New York City are facing another deadly hazard — toxins from the 9-11 attacks that the EPA has been steadfast to ignore. As the heroes of Ground Zero and the residents of New York are struggling to survive the lingering plague of exposure, the federal government has all but abandoned them.

It has been three years since the World Trade Center towers were blown up, yet the EPA has chosen to take a back seat, apparently under orders from the White House, allowing the continued rain of fallout to ruin the health of thousands of New Yorkers.

Now that redevelopment of the targeted areas is planned, and demolition initiatives will again stir the particulates of asbestos and other cancer-causing agents, New York activist groups want the EPA to fulfill its true responsibility: protection of the environment and ultimately the populace that resides there, by finally doing the clean-up that should have been done immediately after the attacks and by seeing to it that redevelopment activities in those areas don't put residents at further risk.

The EPA dropped the ball immediately following the attacks by encouraging residents to believe that it was safe to breathe toxic dust. According to the August 2003 Inspector General's report, the White House Council on Environmental Quality edited the EPA's press releases soon after the WTC's collapse to downplay asbestos dangers and to reopen Wall Street, an act tantamount to their becoming accomplices in murder. Too, the report indicates that the EPA performed only limited cleanups of sites — only 4,100 of the estimated 30,000 residences in selected areas and ignoring nonresidential buildings.

Again, without the complete supervision and due diligence of the EPA, American citizens are poised to witness yet another example of privatization at work. Private companies given the leeway to profit from demolition and reconstruction will be free to cut environmental corners to save a buck. Profiteers will have to be assured there are no costs associated with cancer, birth defects, and chronic illness, and that the health of the citizens does not matter. It is a mindset that money in their pockets is more important than people.

Since three years of dancing the limbo proves that the federal government does not care, and simply wants 9/11 to be put to rest, the requirement now exists that the public demand the entire matter be looked into anew, from the attacks themselves, to how money dedicated to job training and low income housing was actually spent, to how many New Yorkers lost their jobs and homes while officials sat on money for aid, to a failed clean-up effort, and beyond.

Enough is enough. It's time the people got the answers they deserve — answers that break the bonds of a hidden agenda.

— W. Leon Smith

Rangers, Indians Wage War On Comanches

Texas Rangers and Indian allies in war paint crossed the Red River on April 29, 1858, in search of their common enemy — the Comanches.

The key to Hardin Runnels' surprising upset of Sam Houston in the election of 1857 was his pugnacious attitude toward the North and the Indians. While the new governor could not declare war on the Yankees, he was free to turn Rip Ford loose on the Comanches.

Ranger, soldier, newspaperman and politician, John Salmon Ford was also Texas' top Indian fighter. Eight years after ridding the Rio Grande of pesky raiders, he was asked to perform the same service along the Red River.

Putting Old Rip in charge of the state militia, Runnels empowered him to pick and choose a hundred experienced hands. His mission was to "follow any and all trails of hostile or suspected hostile Indians you may discover, and if possible, overtake and chastise them."

From the northwest frontier in February 1858, Ford reported that the bone-chilling tales of terror and devastation were tragically true. In the wake of the

This Week In Texas History

By Barte Haile



Comanche onslaught, entire communities were deserted and commerce was at a complete standstill.

Ford realized his 102-man force would be no match for the Comanches on their home ground above the Red River. So he sought reinforcements from the most promising source, the Brazos Indian Reservation.

The 18,000 acres near the present town Graham was home to the weary remnants of the Caddo, Anadarko, Waco, and Tonkawa tribes. Though remarkably well-adjusted to life on the reservation, they were always eager to take revenge on their ancient nemesis, the Comanche.

Strengthened by the addition of 113 Indian volunteers, the expedition cautiously crossed the Red River in late

April. Ford took his time moving forward only after scouts gave the all-clear.

For 11 days the column advanced into Comanche territory without finding a trace of its quarry. Many of the Texans, who questioned the wisdom of Ford's decision to bring along the braves, wondered if the Indians were leading them on a wild goose chase.

Then on May 11 the Tonkawa scouts spotted a small hunting party homeward bound with a fresh kill. With the main body following at a discreet distance, the Comanches led them right to their camp.

After a tense and sleepless night, Ford unleashed a dawn attack. The handful of Comanches never had a chance, but in the confusion two somehow slipped away to sound the alarm.

In a flash the entire detachment was in hot pursuit. Three miles later, they galloped headlong into the waiting band of Comanches.

The heads of the autonomous tribes waved off the Texans and closed ranks to confront their old adversary. There on the hilltop, his distinctive metal breastplate shining brightly in the morning sun, was none other than the infamous Iron Jacket.

Ford and his Rangers felt strangely out of place, witnesses to a timeless ritual no white man was ever meant to see. They watched in reverent fascination as the horsemen formed two lines for the latest act in the centuries old conflict.

A half dozen reservation Indians raised their rifles and fired a deadly volley knocking the Comanche chieftain's horse out from under him. Iron Jacket scrambled to his feet only to take the second barrage squarely in the chest.

The loss of their invincible leader momentarily dazed the Comanches. Before they came to their senses, the

Brazos brigade was upon them and the battle began in merciless earnest.

The Indians fought to the death in the traditional style of single combat. The hit-and-run, one-on-one contests soon covered 20 square miles.

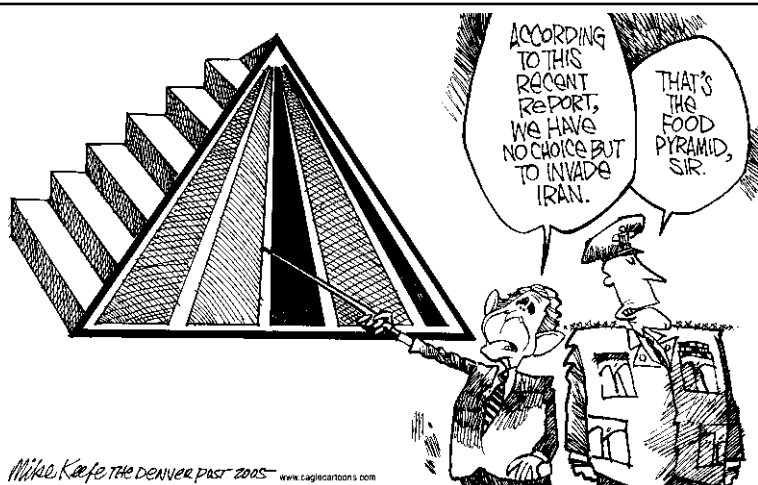
Ford held the restless Rangers in check until, as he later noted in his official account, "Our red allies sent up a wild shout of triumph." Only then did he release the Texans to help finish off the Comanches.

Those that got away were not content to escape with their lives. Determined to reclaim their warrior dignity, they regrouped for a final face-off.

Prancing back and forth on their blood-stained ponies, the Comanches taunted their reservation rivals in hope of provoking a rash reaction. On this occasion, Ford ordered the white troops into position and to his relief the Comanches withdrew.

That night the comrades-in-arms celebrated their respective victories. The Texans took satisfaction in teaching the renegades that their northern stronghold was no longer safe from attack. But for the Indian fighters, the defeat of the hated Comanches meant they could return to the reservation with heads held high.

Barte Haile welcomes your comments, questions and suggestions at haile@pdq.net or 1912 Meadow Creek Dr., Pearland, TX 77581.



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Out Of The Blue

By
Jerry
Tenuto

Today's Word — *Hubris*

I've picked up the term "hubris" from watching on of television's great dramatic series, *Law & Order*.

Hubris, apparently popular in the courtroom, is defined by Merriam-Webster thusly: *n* overweening pride or self-confidence; ARROGANCE.

I submit an update to that definition by adding: Republican, as in Grand Old Party; see also Rove, Karl; Bush, George W.; Cheney, Dick; DeLay, Tom; Frist, Bill; Hastert, Dennis; Santorum, Rick; et al.

The incidences of hubris among the current crop of Republican leaders are impossible to keep track of and catalog. For starters, how is it possible for anyone to be an elected leader, let's say President of the United States, and never err or be responsible for any mistakes? And then get re-elected after not having the humility to admit to his human failings? (Well, we're not entirely sure George W. Bush was *actually* elected in 2000 or 2004 at all, are we.)

Forget how Karl Rove became President, followed by the systematic dismantling of virtually all the programs and policies that were in place or in progress for the good of America and the World as of January 20, 2001.

Fast-forward nine months from that date...

Haven't you wondered what really transpired on September 11, 2001? Bush knew the first tower had been hit before going into the classroom that morning. Aren't you curious why he just shrugged it off? Or how on that particular day, at that precise time, he just happened to be visiting somewhere as innocuous as a grade school that was, coincidentally, in his brother's state?

Why did he sit like a lump of clay for seven minutes after being told of the second tower attack? Why did it take hours to address the nation and world? At the very least he could have phoned in a radio message from Air Force One much sooner. ABC-TV News Anchor Peter Jennings summed it up best that day when he said that in times of crisis some leaders are presidential, and others are not.

It has always bothered me exactly where the Gang of Four: Cheney; Rumsfeld; Rice; and Rove; disappeared to while all these events were taking place, and during the crucial days that followed. Who was really calling the shots?

The bigger question is: Who's been calling the shots since the presidential front man selection of Nov. 7, 2000? And the ensuing bogus vote counts, or no counts?

Under the category of hubris we have Bush's lame excuse for invading a sovereign nation that never posed a threat to the U.S., Saddam Hussein's mythical weapons of mass destruction. Instead of admitting that he was in error, Bush has blamed everyone below the level of cabinet member with incompetence.

Kind of sounds like a page from Saddam's own (and every other despot's) playbook, doesn't it?

We all remember Bush's subsequent rationalization of his addlebrained rush to war with umpteen alternative yet non-compelling excuses for sending our finest young Americans into harm's way. How convenient that he has never mentioned his condemnation of countless tens of thousands of Iraqi men, women, and children to death and dismemberment. And just this week, the search for WMD in Iraq was officially closed without a single one being located.

Unconscionable hubris is allowing the abuse and torture of prisoners under military guard, and then publicly acknowledging that America is defying the International Code of the Geneva Convention. Good God, when I was in the Army — the *former* United States Army, that is — one of the most important subjects of basic training, and continued training thereafter, was proficiency in knowing the Code!

Promoting the guy who fostered the concept to ignore the Code to Attorney General (as if Ashcroft hadn't been bad enough) is hubris. So is letting all the regular Army senior commanders slide for the resultant torturous acts. These acts, by the way, are commonly referred to as atrocities when committed by our enemies.

Am I the only person in America who sees through the sham? The only individuals who have been convicted or indicted for mistreating prisoners at Abu Graib are the poor reservist schleps who were dumb enough to pose for those pictures released to the media. Somebody had to take the photos. And did you see any torture?

Of the five senior officers in this particular Chain of Command, only Brigadier General Janis Karpinski has been left twisting on the hook. I find that more than slightly suspicious, considering she's the lowest ranking, the sole female, and the only reservist — thus not part of the Regular Army Boys' Club.

When the MI types arrived, BG Karpinski had no choice but to comply with them, no questions asked.

Was it just bad luck, or was it by design she commanded a prison manned by an under strength unit of reserve MPs who had no expertise in prison management? Did it matter that she had requested more and properly trained personnel?

During his first term, 10 of Bush's most extremely conservative, right wing judicial nominees were passed over by the Senate. In a painfully clear example of hubris, and just how out of touch or concern he is with mainstream America, he re-nominated seven of them during his second term.

My will be done, sayeth Me.

In a most defiant show of hubris Bush nominated an avowed enemy of the United Nations, John Bolton, as our ambassador to that very body. With typical 1876 Texas sheriff logic, Bush figures why put a person in that position who will actually work with the other member nations. He expects the U.N. — the entire civilized world, the most brilliant, highly educated minds on the planet — to be bullied by Bolton into changing to his way.

As the Senate Foreign Relations Committee expands its inquiries about Bolton, Bush is attempting to make an

end run around them by pushing for a floor vote without committee approval.

According to a recently published interview, the man who is really in charge of the New America, President Rove, has determined that Senate committees and filibusters are unnecessary. All nominees should just be submitted for up or down votes. I guess now that he has his loyal Republican Congressional majority there's no further need for debate — they'll just go through the motions and give appointments the appearance of being Constitutionally selected and approved. Cheney's all up with that idea, too.

How is it a schmuck like Rove, who never (openly) ran for any office at any level, gets to make policy for the Senate?

Presidential hubris even extends to improbity concerning residency. Sure, Bush may have a ranch located near Crawford, because he likes to consider himself a cowboy. But according to the IRS his legal address is listed as Chicago, Illinois. No matter how you cut it, that's a pretty fair distance from anywhere in Texas.

Republican hubris slides on over to the Senate with Majority Leader Bill Frist, in his attempts to eliminate the right of filibuster by Senate Minorities just so the conservatives can have it all their way, thereby negating any opportunity for checks and balances as provided by our Forefathers.

In a major display of abuse of power hubris Cheney stated that he would cast the vote necessary to break the filibuster tie in favor of the Republicans if needed, this coming after Bush said the Administration would stay out of it.

When Frist climbs into bed with the likes of Dr. James Dobson (founder of Focus on the Family), and uses church-based telecasts and events such as "Justice Sunday" to garner Christian support for his anti-filibuster scheme, that's hubris with a capital "AMEN." I can just see the Hancocks, Jeffersons, Franklins, Washingtons, and the rest of the boys from Philadelphia spinning in their graves at that travesty of separation of Church and State.

Hey, Dr. Bill, y'know what? Some of us are not Christians, you pompous schlemiel! That doesn't mean we're not "people of faith." We're Jews and Muslims and Buddhists, or whatever the hell else we want to be! That's what America is all about, or were you absent from Social Studies class that day? All we want is fairness from the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of our Government, the way it is meant to be. Land of the Free and all that.

Of course, it can't be that way if there's only one mindset in charge.

Our Forefathers had a damned good idea with this keeping God out of Government concept. Our Nation has really gone to hell since you "holier than thou" types have spread your venomous constraints of "your way only" throughout the Beltway and Middle America.

Yet, the Hubris King, the putz who can spread it like manure on an Iowa cornfield in March, stench and all, has to be House Majority Leader Tom DeLay. Every time he is caught in an ethics breach, it's the fault of the Liberal media who found him out. Or it's the Democrats plotting to get him. Then, it's the Democrats and the Liberal media working together to bring him down.

When I worked with teens who had

been in trouble with the law, every time they too blamed their problems on the person who caught them. The machinations of the larcenous mind.

Oh, yeah, there's DeLay's old reliable, "What I did was perfectly legal." (Quick, let's change the rules so it actually *is* legit.) Lately, he's been using the "I didn't know" excuse: "I didn't know a South Korean millionaire paid for that trip;" "I didn't know (my good friend) Jack Abramoff put it on his credit card;" etc.

And when all else fails, DeLay has the hubris to play the Jesus card.

My personal favorite is the time DeLay spoke at a church and told the congregation that God had instructed him to pursue the impeachment of President Bill Clinton. God's reasoning was that Tom had the "...correct worldview..." and Clinton had the "...wrong worldview..." This is hubris in maximum overdrive.

So why is his biggest benefactor an Orthodox Jew?

By now you know Hastert has done a hasty retreat on the House ethics rules, or lack thereof, that covered DeLay's sorry skin. The Majority Leader's safety shield was removed by an overwhelming majority vote.

Was it simply coincidence that Bush was in DeLay's district on the day of the vote, wasting taxpayer money stumping for his loony Social Security privatization scam, while DeLay just happened to be present? There they were, making all nicey-nice to each other for the crowd of pre-approved agreeable supporters, sharing a Presidential limousine ride and an Air Force One flight back to D.C.

Who were these two guys trying to fool? It's common knowledge they only tolerate each other for the good of the party, otherwise one would certainly have bush-whacked the other years ago.

Could this be the final kiss-off for DeLay?

Tom, it's time to quit blaming the Democrats, the Liberals, the people who don't believe in Jesus, the newspapers, the television reporters, the bloggers... everyone but Tom DeLay for Tom DeLay's infractions.

For the first time in your life step up and admit you are a charlatan, a small greedy man who abused the little bit of power entrusted to you by good people whom you deceived and cheated. You broke rule after rule and blamed everyone else or claimed ignorance. That's no excuse for any elected official, especially a member of the United States House of Representatives.

It's about time you waved bye-bye to all Americans, Mr. DeLay, because we're fed up to here with you, and in your own Texas parlance, "That dog don't hunt."

There was a time when true statesmen actually ran the White House, Senate and Congress. These were people who performed as functionaries for the good of the Country.

A good many quality statesman still toil for Americans on the Hill. Unfortunately, they can't get anything accomplished because there's a wall of Conservative Republican "leaders" with their own self-interests blocking every attempt at progress in the name of Jesus.

A wise Englishman once said, "The price of greatness is responsibility." You may have heard of him — Sir Winston Churchill. *He* was a great man. You so-called Republican "leaders": Bush; Rove; Cheney; Frist; DeLay; et al, will never be great because your responsibility doesn't extend beyond your front doors.

Cold Medicine: The Key To True Introspection

I'd like to start by apologizing for this column.

Technically speaking, I'm still writing it. However, given the volume of cold medication I have consumed, and keeping in mind that I have finally given in and, as a time saving measure, moved my workstation to the commode, there's a good chance my current location is exactly where this column is headed. Making matters worse, the laptop I'm using is about 10 years old. Getting it open was like shucking a Pismo clam. After opening it, I realized it's the very same model that caused panic aboard a flight to Miami when it overheated and singed the thighs of an intoxicated businessman.

True, I am not on a plane. Yet there are still some frightening similarities: I am under the influence of Codeine. I am in a seated position.

And if this morning was any indication, I won't be leaving my seat for the next few hours.

The upside is that if my laptop should suddenly burst into flames, unlike that unfortunate business traveler, I'll have the option of quickly extinguishing myself by removing the lid to the toilet tank and jumping inside.

(Did I mention I'm on Codeine?)

The good thing about getting sick is that it has forced me to slow down for a day.

I have time to reflect on things.



By
**Ned
Hickson**
Siuslaw News

Be introspective.

For example, while sitting here, I've discovered that static electricity from this laptop makes the hair on my legs stand up. Chances are, I never would have made this discovery at work. At least, not without receiving a warning slip.

I've also come to realize that by pressing our toilet plunger to the floor, then carefully manipulating the exchange of air while simultaneously working the plunger up and down in a breathing pattern, I can make it sound like Darth Vader with a really bad head cold.

Again, had I been at work, it's likely this would have gone undiscovered (Although I can't say for sure).

(Have I mentioned that I'm on Codeine?)

Yep, it's just me, my thoughts, and the frequent spray of air freshener in our small, unventilated bathroom. The fact is, the longer I sit here reflecting, spraying and medicating, the less I care about slowly growing numb from the waist down. Especially if it means having an opportunity to reflect on some funda-

mental questions, such as why I've never noticed there's a spot in our wallpaper pattern that resembles Tina Fey?

I like Tina Fey.

But to be honest, I'm getting a little tired of her staring.

I'm also noticing some other things for the first time. I'm not going to get into them here; it would probably sound a little crazy. Suffice it to say, once I'm feeling better, we will be changing the wallpaper, shower curtain, and quite possibly the floor tiles.

What I will tell you is that I've noticed our bathroom has an underlying aroma. Something that smells like, I don't know...

Searing flesh?

Hold on a second.

OK, I'm back.

Just a little problem with my laptop.

The good news is, I was able to put the flames out before any serious damage was done to my thighs. The bad news is, I had to move to the upstairs bathroom because the downstairs commode is no longer functional.

If we'd installed a low-flow toilet, things might have turned out differently.

Just ask Tina Fey.

She saw the whole thing.

(You can write to Ned Hickson at nhickson@oregonfast.net, or at the Siuslaw News at P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439.)

Get Fatter, Live Longer?

The government recently released its latest "food pyramid." They felt the old pyramid was too confusing, so to make things simpler, they came up with not one, but 12 different color-coded pyramids. It doesn't sound less confusing to me. Then again, we all know from history that it takes a long time to build a good pyramid. Some other nutrition-related information was also in the news. Surprisingly, those who are "slightly overweight" may live longer than those of "normal" weight. And scientists discovered that some people are actually drinking too much water. Nutritional guidelines keep changing. What's the next one going to say? That smoking is good for us?



By
**Lloyd
Garver**

If you go online to mypyramid.com, you'll be told how to find the right pyramid for you. I guess the new health guidelines only apply to people who use the internet. Anyway, you have to answer questions about your caloric needs, and then you'll be guided to the pyramid that fits you. Trying to find the right pyramid is probably a healthy activity, because you won't be eating while you're spending all that energy trying to figure this thing out.

Those responsible for the "slightly overweight" research found that slightly overweight people may live longer than those of "normal" weight. Before you break out the pie and whipped cream, I should tell you that they may live longer, but they will probably not have a healthier life. Being overweight still leads to all kinds of serious medical problems. But that's the kind of hard truth that gets buried in the story. People who struggle with their weight are just going to concentrate on the "slightly overweight equals greater longevity" headline. This sounds a bit dangerous to me. It's going to lead to a lot of rationalizations like, "Give me another piece of cake. It's just going to add years to my life."

And what is "slightly overweight?" 5 pounds? 10 pounds? My guess is it's going to turn out to be the exact weight that people who don't want to lose weight weigh.

If it becomes more desirable to be slightly overweight, there will be all kinds of cultural ramifications. Slightly overweight people will no longer be anxious about wearing a bathing suit. At the beach, those of "normal weight" will probably hear the snickering of those with bulging bellies on the next blanket. Pudgy people will become much more attractive as dates and potential marriage partners. And they will be especially motivated to have children, figuring that their genes will produce slightly overweight kids who will have a long, long life.

The other surprising nutritional statement is that it's possible to drink too much water. This applies mainly to athletes who over-hydrate themselves while exercising. However, I won't be surprised if the general public overreacts to this information by cutting down on their water. So, based on these recent studies, those health-conscious folks who always carry a bottle of water with them may start carrying a pack of Twinkies instead.

Since recommendations keep changing, many of us tend to ignore them. Fat is bad one year, fat is good the next. Carbohydrates are evil, carbohydrates are not so bad. Eggs are good for us, eggs aren't healthy. Red meat is a killer, red meat is healthy. Since all of this is supposed to be based on science, it seems like their pronouncements should be more definite. I know that rewiring a plugged-in lamp while standing in a puddle of water is dangerous today, and it will be dangerous in 50 years. But who knows what nutritionists are going to say is a healthy diet 50 years from now? Maybe only the "slightly overweight" will be around to find out.

Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier" to "Home Improvement." He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's Opinion page and can be reached at lloydgarver@yahoo.com

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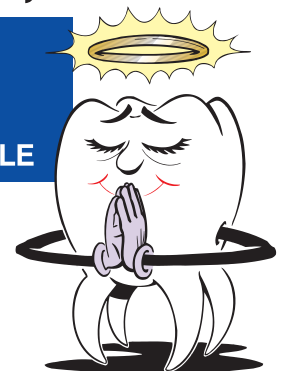
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

President Bush has done it again. His ongoing push to reform Social Security, the passage into law of the bankruptcy reform bill he supported and his estate tax repeal proposal perpetuate his habitual pattern of extending welfare to the affluent and the corporate, of doing for the few, not the many.

The first President Bush, basically shy and self-effacing, could be vindictive, a quality shared in spades by his wife and first son. As president, he was circumspect, yet too enamored of foreign affairs to attend sufficiently to domestic issues. Admittedly, though, he made a significant contribution to national security in forging solidarity with our allies abroad, no small accomplishment, that the current President Bush has willfully compromised.

Unlike the moderate path trod by his distinguished grandfather, Prescott Bush, the decent, dutiful, prudent, principled, industrious, athletic, competitive, irrepressible, yarn-swapping, many-faceted courtly gentleman, imposing presence and practitioner of noblesse oblige - a vital component of true Republicanism - George Bush Jr.'s course of action is perennially brash, bullying and inhumane on both global and domestic fronts, as in outsourcing good jobs to the educated in China and India (where uneducated minions slave in atrocious conditions for minimal pay) and detainees for secret torture in Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia; his opposition to the international initiative to save whales and other marine life victimized by military sonar systems and his winning the fight to drill for oil in the Alaska Wildlife Refuge. His new budget originally proposed stripping programs that would benefit veterans, school children and the needy while allowing for more tax cuts for the wealthy and making his first term cuts permanent; besides stinting on law enforcement, national park systems, wastewater treatment, aid to farmers and other important matters.

Some day, if what goes around comes around, George Sr. and Barbara may have to concede to each other that their first born's presidency is a mess, unless the towering Prescott Bush, from his lofty home in eternity, can impart to the profligate president some of his own benevolence and wisdom.

Elizabeth Gerteiny, Westport, CT

To The Editor:

While hate wins in Texas, the children suffer. I am shocked that Texas might become the first state to bar gay citizens from becoming foster parents. Not only does this recent vote by the Texas legislature make no sense, children end up suffering for this display of hate. Sexual orientation is not something that can be taught or "caught". Moreover, these kinds of harmful ideas have no place in local or state government.

While states such as Connecticut and Massachusetts are finally standing up for equality and justice, hate and stereotypes still dominate much of Texas legislation. Discriminating against gay foster parents feeds the homophobic hysteria that teaches people how to perpetuate inequality and hateful prejudices. As a result, Texas children suffer.

I commend legislators for wanting to reform Texas's Child Protective Services agency and improving standards for foster care selection. There must be improvements made to the system to

overcome racial disparities and drug use. However, outlawing responsible and mature foster parents (who happen to be gay) from providing homes to children is absurd. This policy discriminates unnecessarily and only weakens the foster care system. People have a right to hate. But children have a right to loving families.

Ken Seifert, Conroe, TX

To The Editor:

One significant aspect of the 'great debate over Social Security' that receives less attention that it rightfully deserves is that, if private accounts are carved out of employee contributions to Social Security, then the employer matching component presumably will also be reduced. Everybody talks about how Social Security benefits would be cut - although everyone seems to have a different perspective on those reductions - but nobody seems to mention that benefit cuts would be compelled by the double reduction in overall contributions: once from the up to 4% that Bush wants to carve out of our own contributions, and another 4% from the matching portion from employers. That little tidbit amounts to another enormous gift to businesses and corporations, a lobby group already literally showered with huge tax breaks.

Another aspect that strikes me as unfair is that our contributions-from-income naturally climbs as our personal income rises, yet the administration wants to tie our annual benefit increases to the cost-of-living index. Does anybody besides me see that as basically double-dealing?

Tim Slack, Newburgh, IN

To The Editor:

An Extremist By Any Other Name is Still an Extremist.

Well ... we don't have to wonder any more. We now have proof that the Republican Party has been taken over by extremists. These extremists have decided that their far right religious beliefs are the only ones that count. All other beliefs are incorrect.

No compromise can be made. Why? Because even the middle ground is no longer acceptable to these fanatics.

The middle ground, which is where compromises take place, is not far right enough. Frist said this in his statement today declining to compromise with the Democrats on judicial nomination. So ... just like George Bush has said in words and deeds so many times before, Frist is now saying it's "my way or the highway."

I have to admit that I have been in favor of the Democrats blocking these particular judges all along because far right activist judges are just plain scary. Their black and white, unchanging view of the world is the kind of stuff nightmares and totalitarianism are made of.

Now, however, I have to say that I oppose these judges based upon the principle of the matter as well. The Republican Party has gone too far. The Republican Party has to be stopped from its power grab. The Republican Party and its coconspirators, the religious right, have to be stopped from turning this country into a fascist regime ruled by a theocracy and not the rule of law.

Frist, go ahead and use the nuclear option. Frist, go ahead and burn your bridges. You will not prevail however.

This country is better than you are. This country is more moral and even-handed than you are. And ... with every

passing breath you take and every word you mutter this country is becoming more and more aware of just how extreme you and the Republican Party are.

I must also admit that I am hoping that the few moderate Republicans left will stop you. I admit that I would savor your defeat if men and women of principle such as Snowe, McCain, Hagel, Lugar, Specter, Voinovich, Chafee, and Collins were to stand up and save the Republican Party from itself.

At the same time ... I also look forward to the just deserts that the Republicans will have earned when they are thrown out of office for the total economic meltdown that is coming. You will not be able to blame this one on Clinton. You will not be able to blame this on Democrats in Congress or the Senate. Nope. This time there is a great, big scarlet "R" stamped across the twin deficits that will lead to a traumatic standard-of-living adjustment in this country.

Frist and his cohorts are fiddling around with the constitution while America is teetering on the brink of economic disaster. While issues of great import such as the budget deficit, trade deficit, the war in Iraq, and affordable health care are languishing, the Republican Party is intent on taking this country back in time to when the social conservative snobs ruled.

The problem with all this is that when all of this is said and done, simply saying "I told you so" will not take this awful taste out of my mouth.

Angie Pratt

Dear Editor,

There seems to be so much dangerous pending legislation in this country that I feel I should try to reduce it down to manageable proportions if possible.

The biggest threats to our national independence and economic survival are CAFTA: the Central American Free Trade Agreement, due for a projected congressional vote this month (May), and the FTAA: the Free Trade Area of the Americas, both designed to further outsource our jobs and businesses to low wage foreign countries, and The WTO: World Trade Organization that is imposing damaging international controls on even our domestic economy, and The Law of the Sea Treaty, opposed by our own Naval Institute as dangerous to national security and candidly known as L.O.S.T, which will give the U.N. control over the oceans' seven-tenths of the earth's surface including all control and resources of the seas!

If we are to preserve our country and reverse our downhill slide into internationalism and dependency it's inescapable that we must demand congress preserve our jobs by stopping the CAFTA and FTAA legislation, withdrawing from the WTO now, and demand that our senators stop the Law of The Sea Treaty (If L.O.S.T wins we lose).

Our great civilization is being henpecked to death by every international conspiracy there is.

We must stop our national suicide by regaining control of our government through our pressure on congress.

See: <www.thenewamerican.com> (search: CAFTA, FTAA, WTO, LOST) or call: 1-800-JBS-USA-1 to get free FTAA information packet, and contact congress immediately.

Sincerely,

John Reynolds, Hesperia, Calif.

Dear Editor,

Last night, April 28, 2005, is a night that will go down in infamy for the Town of Greenburgh's Democratic Committee.

At the executive committee meeting last night where they made recommendations to the entire committee for offices of town council and

supervisor was a mockery of the political process.

As a man of color, I am ashamed at the direction this committee is being led in. Last night a mixed group of both African Americans and Caucasians accused the Town Supervisor, Paul Feiner, of being a racist. It is the lowest point of my experience with politics, it is shameful.

They accused him of also showing bias towards women in his administration; nothing can be further from the truth. This is a man who has been elected by the people for the work he does for them. This committee aims to drag his good name through the mud, with the help of the politics of personal destruction. It is my opinion that the ill feelings they hold for this man is personal. I call on all registered Democrats in the Town of Greenburgh to take back your party before more damage is done by this anarchist group. As a Democrat I am ashamed of their behavior, we deserve to be beaten if this is the way we behave.

Sincerely yours,

Jason D. Gooljar, Hartsdale, NY

To The Editor:

Placebo tax relief?

Voters need to pay particular attention to what the Texas Legislature is currently doing regarding statewide property taxes. Now, the promised cut in taxes is going to be phased in over three years ("Senate plan offers tax relief / Voters would have to approve statewide property tax amendment," Houston Chronicle April 26), yet the offset of increased taxes on businesses will take effect immediately. Since when do businesses "pay taxes" anyway? They just pass "taxes" along to consumers as their cost of doing business. Currently the senate is stalling on providing realistic resolutions.

Remember the saying, "The more things change the more they stay the same."? That seems to hold true especially with our legislature. How hard can it really be to make needed changes in the best interest of the community? Instead of postponing urgent resolutions indefinitely, legislators must do their jobs professionally. Voters need to demand more from their elected officials.

Peter Stern, Driftwood, TX

To The Editor:

Ask the Hardball Questions

When are the news media going to ask the President of the United States some real hardball questions?

Instead of throwing softballs at this President's rare news conferences, why doesn't the news media ask him why he encouraged and supported huge tax write-offs on gas-guzzling Hummers and SUVs - all this at a time when crude oil prices are going through the roof and petroleum companies are making unprecedented windfall profits.

Why doesn't the news media pound home the fact that all too many CEO's of large corporations are bilking stockholders of billions of dollars by extracting obscenely huge pay and compensation packages that are far out of line, historically, with the services they provide - especially for those who have driven their companies into the ground!

One simple question one might ask is "How can this President justify the enormous tax cuts for prosperous corporations while regularly running up unprecedented budget deficits?" It certainly can't be for the purpose of strengthening our economy - even with the tax reductions on both earned and unearned income, every year hundreds of thousands of jobs still are being moved offshore so that corporations can further escape taxes and find dirt-cheap labor.

All this President seems to want to do is cut taxes. His hare-brained economic policies are even beginning to tax the credulity of his true believers.

Paul G. Jaehnert, Vadnais Hts., MN



1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Is Missing?

After over four years of regularly sending **The Lone Star Iconoclast** to President Bush at the White House, the publishers of The Iconoclast were astonished recently when a portion of the Feb. 9 edition of the newspaper was returned, claiming

“No Such Number, Unable To Forward.”

If the U.S. Postal Service cannot find President Bush, who can?

What does this mean?

Central Texas Arthritis Foundation o Host 2005 Margarita & Salsa Festival



MARGARITA & SALSA FESTIVAL BENEFITTING THE
God gave us two hands. One to help ourselves, the second to help others.

WACO — The Central Texas Arthritis Foundation will hold its 10th annual Margarita & Salsa Festival on Aug. 27, at the Heart O' Texas Fair Complex.

The organization says that in the days to come it will announce “the hottest

entertainment line-up ever to perform” at the event.

For ten years, Central Texans have annually had an opportunity to enjoy cold beverages, spicy salsa and hot entertainers, while raising money for arthritis research.

And this year, say promoters, on the tenth anniversary of the event, the Arthritis Foundation continues to grow the event by bringing big name artists to “Salsaritaville.”

For more information on the Foundation, log on to www.salsaritaville.com.

Lone Star Youth Orchestra Holding Auditions For '05-06

IRVING, Texas — The Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra has scheduled auditions for the 2005-2006 Lone Star Youth Orchestra (LSYO).

Auditions will be held at the Irving Arts Center on Wednesday, May 11, from 6:30 p.m. until 9 p.m.; Wednesday, June 22, from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m.; and Saturday, Aug. 20, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Auditions are open to all junior high and high school students, as well as younger students who demonstrate an advanced level of playing.

The LSYO is looking for string, brass, woodwind, and percussion players. Audition information and requirements are available on the Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra website at www.lascolinassyphony.org under the LSYO link or by calling the LCSO office at 972-580-1566. Membership will be based solely on these auditions.

The Lone Star Youth Orchestra, one component of the Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra's many educational initiatives, is an advanced level orchestra that provides young motivated instrumentalists the opportunity to supplement and enhance their musical education by providing opportunities to learn symphonic literature through high quality orchestral and ensemble training.



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